

Failure of PDS

* 174. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that PDS is a failure in the country;
- (b) if so, the reasons for such failure and the steps taken by Government to improve the system;
- (c) whether Government propose to introduce income generating schemes for poor in place of PDS; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Public Distribution system (PDS) is one of the important elements of the Government's food security system in the country.

The PDS is the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Central Government is responsible for procuring, storing and transporting PDS commodities upto the central godowns and making them available to the States/UTs. Actual distribution of PDS commodities through Fair Price Shops is the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations.

Some shortcomings in a vast system of public distribution of subsidized commodities cannot be ruled out altogether. In order to make the PDS more * effective, efficient and accountable, the Government has issued the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The salient features of the Order relate to proper identification of eligible families, issue of ration cards, licensing of fair price shops, scale of issue and issue prices, distribution of essential commodities and monitoring. Any contravention of the provisions of clauses 3,4,6 and 7 of the Order is liable for criminal punishment under section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

The Government has advised the State Governments/UT Administrations to involve the Gram Panchayats more substantially in the supervision and monitoring of the PDS, especially at the FPS level, as a measure of social

audit. A Model Citizens' Charter has also been drawn and circulated to States/UTs for adoption.

(c) and (d) No such proposal to replace the PDS is under consideration at present. However, the Government has launched many schemes, including employment generating schemes, for the welfare of the poor.

Attacks on Indian Fishermen

* 175. SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up the matter regarding the repeated attacks on the Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, with the Government of Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what actions have been taken or is proposed to be taken to prevent such type of atrocities by Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JAS WANT SINGH):

(a) to (c) Government take up every reported incident of shooting of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Government has denied involvement of its Navy in a large majority of cases. The issue was also brought up during the visit of the President of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, in February 2001. The Sri Lankan Government have assured Government of India that their forces » are under instructions to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with Indian fishermen found in Sri Lankan Waters.

Improvement of PDS

† * 176. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene being distributed per unit under Public Distribution System and the categories to whom the said items are being provided at present;

(b) whether Government have formulated any scheme to improve Public Distribution System;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.